

The Muddy Puddle

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Bellboys	1
Super Stud	1
DO speaks	2
D.O.M	3
Club Dives	4
Flatties	5
AGN	6
Falmouth 2000	7
Narcosis	7
Red Sea	8
Diver of the Year	10

The Bells, the Bells.....

On the Saturday the 9th September, several sleepy eyed members of the Croydon BSAC set off on one of the most memorable dives of recent years. Their objective the Caleb Sprague, a steamer 10 miles of Eastbourne, on the seabed, 50 metres down. It was a little after 7:00 when their ride left Eastbourne's Sovereign Harbour, for the wreck. For most of the previous week the weather had thrown it's might against the south coast, causing some to hope that the dive would be cancelled, especially with several divers having to leave home at around 5:00 am to make it to the boat in time. The weather abated to reveal an almost flat calm day, with a swell of about 1 1/2 foot. Given all this several members had decided to pull off of the dive at the last minute, leaving just 7 lucky divers to proceed.

Given the depth and target, only experienced Sports/Dive Leaders were permitted to dive this wreck. All knew this would be a decompression dive with all but one diver using a twin set (The odd one out had twin ponies plus a 15 l).

The decompression, every one knew would constitute at least half to two thirds the total dive time, even with most, if not all divers, decom-

pressing on a Nitrox mix of between 50 and 80 percent.

A shot line was thrown down to the bridge area of the wreck and shortly after 9 am the first pair of divers entered the water.

Vis was between 10 and 15m, water temperature up around 18 degrees and definite dry suit territory for decompression diving.

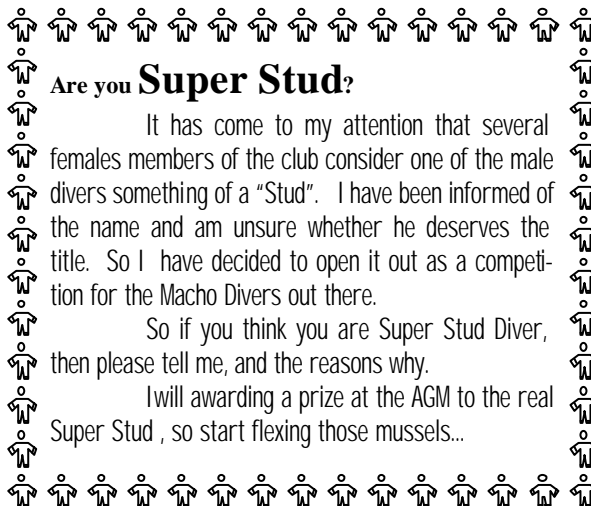
The second pairing entered the water moments later and wound their way down. Then the moment that every diver waits for happened, once on the bridge area, one of the pair turned his torch beam towards the seabed, some 12 metres below him, and there highlighted in the beam was a familiar shape, he motioned for his buddy to follow him down, and then attached the object to a lift bag his buddy was carrying, and

sent it up.

The skipper on the surface retrieved the bag and almost fainted when he saw, hanging from the bag, the Caleb Sprague's bronze Ship's Bell. Standing about 10 inches high, with a base circumference of approx 11 inches, an excellent find in anybody's book. The only thing missing was the clanger to strike the bell with, this was often removed whilst on active service.

It seemed impossible to many that this had not be found before, given that it was just laying on the seabed by the bow, and the wreck is dived week in week out.

To make matters worst on the very next dive the same pairing came across an Electric Ray, quite rare in shallow waters. Giving both of them a shock, quite literally, especially when stabbed with a steel knife.



Are you Super Stud?

It has come to my attention that several females members of the club consider one of the male divers something of a "Stud". I have been informed of the name and am unsure whether he deserves the title. So I have decided to open it out as a competition for the Macho Divers out there.

So if you think you are Super Stud Diver, then please tell me, and the reasons why.

I will awarding a prize at the AGM to the real Super Stud, so start flexing those mussels...

DIVES COMING SOON

Sunday 17th Sept

Littlehampton
7:00am
Paul Brown (SD+)

Sunday 24th Sept

Brighton
7:30am
Channel Diver (CL+)

5-12th October

Red Sea
Royal Diving 3 (SD+)

CL = Club Diver
SD = Sports Diver
DL = Dive Leader

DIVING OFFICER'S RAMBLINGS

Me again, but for the last time.

As you probably know, I've decided to vanish into oblivion after this year's AGM. No more Wednesday poolside extravaganzas trying to delegate as much as possible to others while I stand carefree at the water's edge; no more anxious/attentive looks in the pub whilst being accosted by people wanting training; no more trying to look interested when I'm told I've missed the best dive ever recorded. All that's finished. It's rather like taking early retirement.

As my swansong, the Committee asked me to commit to paper what I really think of the Club's members. Wow, what an opportunity. Having deliberated at length, I've decided not to pick out individuals but rather individual types of member. Draw your own comparisons with real people:

The partially sighted trainee

Typical attendance is two weeks on, four weeks off. During the two weeks, reference is frequently made to lack of progress.

The expert trainee

Often has a sibling/friend in the sport already. Learned how to use decompression tables while still suckling. Advises instructors how best to teach.

The magician

Whether on land or on the waves, this diver vanishes into thin air whenever there is anything to be done only to reappear just too late to help.

The pool diver

Rarely seen in open water but cruises the depths of swimming pools with ease. If cornered, will agree to dive in open water only to be struck down with some killer disease or catastrophic equipment failure hours before the agreed time.

The Janus man

Always says "yes" while actually meaning "no". Does no diving at all.

Mr/Ms Expletive

Is f***ing brilliant at every f***ing thing. Has an amazing f***ing command of English f***ing grammar, particularly participial f***ing adjectives.

The deep thinker

Only happy in depths exceeding 40 metres. Anything shallower does not count as a real dive.

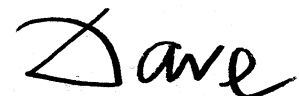
The computer expert

Knows exactly what a dive computer is for but does not have the first clue how to use it. Often mistakes water temperature for no stop time remaining.

Recognise anyone? Mmmmmmmmmmm.....

In this final paragraph, I'd like to sum up the year. The club started a bit shakily but ran smoothly for much of the time. I've had loads of help from a number of people whose names I shall reveal at the AGM for maximum embarrassment. The RIB's been out more times than ever before; we've had lots of try dives from which we've had many new members. Moral is the best I've seen it for quite a few years.

See you at the AGM,



Pot Calling the Kettle.

As many readers may recall, Mr Eason was labelled Victor Meldrew, after his constant moaning during the club weekend at Easter. Some would say he hasn't stopped, I don't believe it.

But during Falmouth 2000, Mr Victor "Eason" Meldrew labelled Mr Salies with the same brush after several moans by Mr Sailes. To an extent Mr Sailes deserved it, but there can only be one Mr Meldrew. Although as a compromise they could hence forth be called Victor 1 and Victor 2 respectively.

Diver(s) of the Month

Well as predicted it was a splendid month for diver and non-diver stupidity. Diver of the Month has been over run will applicants this month. From single acts of the bizarre to group organisational stupidity. No one came forward as per last month with a non-foolish nomination, so Dave is still our only D.o.M. winning on credit to his character rather than debit.

The month started with a couple of deep dives for the more experienced members of the club, ample opportunity for D.o.M awards, however in very uncharacteristic behaviour the motley crews of these 3 deep trips were well behaved. Although Mr Elphick and Mr Eason were reported to have had a lovers tiff at 40metres, over directions and deco.

Things started to go wrong for other people on supposed less complex dives. One dry-suited diver forgot his ankle weights on one dive but continued on regardless. (Ankle weights are not a necessity for Dry-suit diving but are considered a great help by many). This Diver became inverted on a wreck and had trouble righting himself, but with the aid of his buddy managed to complete his way back to the shot. He and his buddy ascended to their deco stop correctly but once again he became inverted... Doh!! His buddy was unable to right him this time for one reason or another. To stop himself ascending any further he took a tight grip of the line and finned vigorously to compensate for the suit buoyancy. Luckily Mr Eddie Driver completed his deco successfully with the aid of the shot line, his buddy, and the use of an extremely tired set of legs. But this was just the shape of things to come.

Early in the month a RiB dive was organised from Newhaven, with an experienced Dive Leader and Committee member at the helm. The RiB had recently been serviced and was allegedly in tip-top shape. The experienced Coxswain slipped the boat with the aid of the Littlehampton tractor, climbed aboard and tried to start the engines. They did not fire. He then called upon the aid of other experienced members, to help him start the engine, to no avail. He removed the engine cover, checked the plugs, the fuel mixture and all the pipes and plumbing but still the engines would not fire. By now people were r-ticing, especially by the number of expletives coming from those onboard BSAC0023's RiB. Finally the decision was taken to call for the tractor to haul them out. Just then a person from the company who serviced the RiB happen by, after hearing of their troubles asked whether the keys were in the Kill Switches or not. These are the keys, which fit under the throttle unit and loop around the pilot's (driver) legs so that if the pilot is thrown over board, then the engines will stop immediately. Paul Brown's face was initially

blank, and then turned a bright red, followed by lots of self-cursing. They had by now lost slack on their designated wreck, but the day was not an entire loss as they enjoyed a dive on the Mulberries.

Another attempt at Diver of the Month was the person who accidentally walked off with the key to the boat yard at Littlehampton. Rumour has it that the key is attached to steel chain 17 feet long and anchored to an iron weight, but as no one was forth coming with the name of the culprit, this attempt has been brushed aside.

Then there is the case of two divers who planned on doing just 10 minutes of decompression, but ended up nearer to 40 minutes. The two claimed that when they left the bottom, their computers read 10 minutes of decompression was required, they also claim that neither of them was narced... But when they reached their first deco stop their computers were demanding that more than 30 minutes of stops be done. How can this be? Yes, they were at 37 m, and yes there was a lot of shot line out, but even so 10 minutes does not become 30 minutes, unless you ascend very, very, slowly, e.g.2 m per hour. No, these were either Narced, (there's no shame it that) or haven't bothered to read the manuals, which came with their dive computers. Hopefully, Mr Paynton and Mr Sailes have learnt something from this experience, and will be undertaking a little light reading. May I suggest Dive Computers for Dummies, and "Nitrogen Narcosis and how it effects you: - a study on lab rats" by the US Navy.

But this months Winner of the Diver of the Month Award goes to.... Well just read the story, picture Falmouth a quiet West Country fishing village at the end of summer...

Disaster struck on the first day as a small group of 0023ers attended the nearest Balti house after a small number of "swift halves". One of their number, who I shall refer to as Pony-tail-less, complained about his meal, in particular it was not what he ordered. (This situation took some of the gathered throng back to the barmy days of Weymouth at Easter). He was offered another meal, which was also not to his satisfaction. Then seeing a window of opportunity, another member of the throng started to mention aloud the quality of his food, this person we shall refer to a Victor. Other people in the restaurant clearly love the food (some said that this was because they had experienced none of the top quality Indian establishments of the great metropolis, other because they were bumpkins who

knew no better, other because they liked the taste of rat). Anyhow, the management sensing some decent amongst the party came to enquire after the problem. This is where they made their critical mistake, the manager mentioned to one member, who we shall call "Barnacle Bill the Sailor", and I quote "The management has the policy if you don't enjoy the meal, you don't have to pay". Barnacle Bill the Sailor thought for a moment and then replied, "To be honest I've had better, much better. The rice is very sticky and in clumps. I've had better". The manager shrugged and walked away leaving the table with blank and stunned faces then realising what had happen all rose and left without looking back. After all, a free curry is better than no curry at all, even if it wasn't great.

The Nepal Balti House of Falmouth, for sheer stupidity, has won this month's Diver of the Month. Never, ever offer a diver a chance of getting a curry for nothing.

Club Diving

Since the last issue the club has undertaken a selection of more challenging dives, plus a weekend away for Sports divers and above.

First off, a group of divers from the club tackled the wreck of the Argonaut, off of Dungeness. She lies in 35 metres of water and is of considerable size, having once been over 330 ft long. She was originally a Luxury Steam Yacht until she was rammed in thick fog in 1908. All passengers and crew were saved before she sunk beneath the waves. Today is still remains generally ship shaped, with the stern still intact. At here highest point she rises to 10 metres above the gravel seabed, which is excellent for Scallops. The Argonaut was dived on two separate weekends during this period both to great appaluse.

The club also dived the HMS Moldavia, a legendary wreck amongst South Coast divers. The Moldavia or "Molly" as she is often called, was 521 ft long and weighed 9,505 tons, one of P&O's "M" series liners and was launched in 1903. During World War One she was pressed into service as an armed merchant vessel. Then in May 1918, whilst ferrying American servicemen, she was torpedoed by a U-Boat, for the lost of 53 lives. Today she lies in 45m, and is up to 17 m, proud of the seabed. The ship lies on her port side, and is relatively intact. She is 24 miles out from Littlehampton, in the heart of the shipping lanes and in some quite serious currents, however the Vis is better

than many of the nearer to shore wreck more regularly dived, and is a great favorite with the more experienced members of the club. This dive also the first outing of the new Emuss-Brown Deco Station, as seen in the last issue, and was a great success.

On a glorious summers day, the club under took a spectacular dive on the Mulberries, although this wasn't the intended target, however due to problem that will be discussed elsewhere, the Mulberries were adopted. This was an excellent chance for the less depth hungry dives to get wet, and provided an excellent opportunity to examine marine life, which are often seen of deep wrecks without the necessity of going deep. Needless to say this still remains a favorite dive with many of the club's divers.

The August Bank holiday saw another band of divers from Croydon travel down to the tip of the West Country, to Falmouth to experience the wonders of clear Vis at depth, although the weather had destroyed the Vis from it's usually 15m down to between 5 and 10m (shame). For further details please see separate article.

The Final dive of this period was on the Caleb Sprague, off Beachy Head. One that several divers had been waiting for, for over a year. This wreck was originally to have been dived last year, although the weather did not permit this. This year many had hope the weather would strike again, due to the very early start require, although the weather lifted to give perfect conditions albeit through a heavily overcast sky. The Sprague was a steamer of 1,813 tons and 250 ft long, until she was torpedoed on the 31st January 1944, for the loss of 25 crew and 4 gunners. She now lies in a depth of 48 – 50 m, with most of the stern and holds 3 and 4 torn away and damaged, however the bow, holds 1 and 2, and the main bridge are remain relatively undamaged, and is up to 12 m proud of the see bed.

All in all, an excellent month of diving.

Pool Times

Summer is now effectively over so normal pool times have resumed. 8 until 9 Wednesdays, and 9 until 10 on Tuesdays at St. Joseph's Pool.

The Pub will still be the Crown and Septre on a Wednesday evening from 9 pm.

Diver of the Year.... (The Real One)

This years REAL Diver of the Year Award is going to be run slightly different to that of previous years.

The D.O has request that club members nominate divers for the award. Then at the end of the year he will assess each nomination and award as appropriate.

Nominees do not need to be the great and the good, but a diver who has impressed others with their actions, temperament and attitude throughout the year. This could be a novice diver who has excelled during their training, or had to overcome great difficulties and finally won through.

Alternatively this could be a diver who has grown in stature over the season, or someone you respect and admire (as a diver).

You will be asked to validate your reasons for nominating the individual. All nominators will be forwarded into a raffle.

Use the form on page 10 and hand it to the Dry-Member or D.O before the end of the season.

How to clean and fillet Flatties

Cleaning

1. Place the fish on it's back and locate the gut cavity by pressing on the white side of the fish, just below it's head. The Gut area will be softer than the rest of the fish.
2. Make a small incision here, and pull the intestines out with your fingers.
3. Cut out the guts and trim down the fins. Sole and Brill need cleaning others do not.

Filleting

1. Make sure you have a flat cleaning surface and a good sharp knife
2. Begin by placing a cut down to the backbone just behind the gills.
3. Next, make an incision right down the lateral line to the backbone forming a "T" with your two cuts.
4. Finish the "T" cut all the way to the tail down to the backbone.
5. Begin slicing down to the backbone on one side.
6. Cut all the way to the top of the fish right along the bones.
7. Do the same with the other half of that side.
8. Lay your knife almost flat and begin skinning from the tail forward. Move knife in a sawing motion as you pull the fish through the knife edge.
9. Do the same with the other half.
10. Now repeat the process on the white side!

It really is quite simple if you take your time and pay attention. The backbones will guide you all the way.

FlattieFlorentine

A fast dish that is easy enough for weeknights, but good enough for company.

- 2 10 oz packages frozen leaf spinach, thawed
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 Tablespoons butter
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 1/3 pounds Flounder or Plaice fillets
- 6 Tablespoons sour cream
- 2 Tablespoons dry white wine
- 3 Tablespoons Parmesan Cheese
- Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

To thaw spinach, remove from boxes and place in a bowl; cover and microwave until defrosted, about 2 - 3 minutes. Drain well and squeeze out excess water.

Meanwhile, melt butter in a skillet and saute onions until tender. Add spinach and cook for a few more minutes, stirring well. Season with salt and pepper. Spread spinach mixture in a greased shallow baking dish just large enough to hold the fillets in one layer.

Arrange the fish fillets on top of the bed of spinach. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Blend sour cream and wine and spread over the fish. Sprinkle with grated cheese. Bake in a 425 degree oven for 15 minutes or until the fish flakes when touched with a fork.

Yield: 4 servings.

Greydon BSA

are proud announce the

Christmas Party 2000

9th December 2000

Pitchers Sports Bar

Sutton

This is open to members and non-members alike.

Tickets will be on sale from the 1st August

For more details see

AGM 2000

23rd October 2000

8:00 P.M

**Pitchers Sports Bar
Sutton**

After the end of the season the club AGM will be held, at which point the present committee will resign and a new committee will be voted in. Any club member may apply for a post (especially editor), although some posts such as Diving Officer have qualification requirements. Some of the present Committee will be reapplying for their posts whilst others will not.

As a club member this is where you can see all those who are tasked with running the club, both over the past and the coming year.

All club members are encouraged to attend and are welcome to ask any questions or raise any points they may have. It is also where the club awards are handed out, both serious and silly. The main ones being Diver of the Year (serious) and Trainee of the Year.

If you are new to the club it is also a good way to interact meet with other members, other than the Pub on a Wednesday evening.

After the formal proceedings most members usually hang around for a beer or two, and a curry has not been unheard of, although this is not compulsory.

If you wish to apply for a post please contact Dave Elphick for an application form, even if you wish to apply for Dave's post. He won't bite and likes a good bit of healthy competition.

Falmouth 2000

The August bank holiday represents the annual club trip to the West Country to try to enjoy some fantastic diving with good viz and great weather. Plus the honour of several hours sitting in motorway traffic jams and torrential rain. This year some things changed. First off, Falmouth was subjected to Easterly winds, which did not allow for great viz, down to between 4 and 10 metres and hindered to some extent by a kelp bloom. Next some of the crew got away without endless hours in traffic, and the journeys were generally pretty good and finally the rain held off. One thing remains the same for club weekends away, the usually crowd attend, with few exceptions. The weekend was open to all sports divers and above but in the end South Bank University BSAC filled the 4 un-taken places from Croydon BSAC.

Accommodation was in the Pennpol Guest House in Falmouth, just 3 minutes from the Dive Shop, and the price included daily Breakfast entertainment, from the mother of the landlady and our own Mr Elphick.

The boat was called Under Pressure, which was not the case. The boat resembled a Red Sea Day boat; it had a dry cabin area, which could house the entire dive crew. It had all the required electronics, an area for sunning oneself and a small dive platform on the rear. Second tanks were supplied by the boat and all air fills handled over night. Lunch was served between dives, which consisted of rolls or sandwiches made to order on board with a buffet salad, and soft drinks, tea and coffee. Even the glutons Eason and Boddington ate their fill (or almost their fill of 4 – 6 sandwiches). One of the most important things on any Dive boat, the ladder, was superb. There were no complaints about it from any of the "less leg endowed" (which makes a change). Steve the skipper was great and joined in the antics of the buffoons on board.

Diving was mainly in the 30-40 metres range for the first dives with second dives around 20-25 metres. Several wrecks were dived including the Veritias, as well as a wall dive on the Manacles. Fish life consisted of mainly Wrasse and Pollock with the indomitable Pouting everywhere on the wreck. Several congers were noted, including one free swimming. Several Dogfish were seen on the Manacles and one buddy pair came across a Spur-Dog, which Mr Elphick tried "Tonic Immobilization" upon, much to the distress of the Spur-Dog.

Most dives on average lasted between 40 and 50 minutes although one buddy pairing managed 90 minutes, to a maximum depth of 37 metres. Unlike all the other pairings they decided to deco on the shot line instead of deploying an SMB. The skipper, Steve, knew they were there so were safe from a

surface point of view, but hanging on the shot line for over 40 minutes in a running tide was not particularly enjoyable, nor warm.

Evening activities as usually revolved around socialising, sampling a tippie or two, and tasting the local Indian delicacies. One poor bit of planning I must point out, is that the Expeditions Officer did not phone ahead of the BSAC 0023 trip to Falmouth and warn the local pubs and especially the curry houses of the impending arrival of a host of Curry and Beer monsters. On the final night the group went for a Thai meal in town, which was extremely successful and might even replace the curry as the Diver's Meal of Choice.

Overall the weekend was a great laugh as usual, the weather held out and the diving although not truly great was worth the trip down. Hopefully we'll be back next year, with Steve and his superb boat Under Pressure. Once again many thanks to all those involved and especially to the much moaned at Paul Brown, Expeditions officer extraordinaire, is if rumours are to be believed is still trying to find out the prices of the Canoes..

WHAT IS NITROGEN NARCOSIS?

Nitrogen narcosis, also called "rapture of the deep" and "the martini effect," results from a direct toxic effect of high nitrogen pressure on nerve conduction. It is an alcohol-like effect, a feeling often compared to drinking a martini on an empty stomach: slightly giddy, woozy, a little off balance.

Nitrogen narcosis is a highly variable sensation but always depth-related. Some divers experience no narcotic effect at depths up to 40 m, whereas others feel some effect at around 25m. One thing is certain: once begun, the narcotic effect increases with increasing depth. Each additional 15 m depth is said to feel like having another martini. The diver may feel and act totally drunk. Underwater, of course, this sensation can be deadly. Divers suffering nitrogen narcosis have been observed taking the regulator out of their mouth and handing it to a fish!

In *The Silent World*, Cousteau wrote about his early experiences with the aqua lung:

I am personally quite receptive to nitrogen

rapture. I like it and fear it like doom. It destroys the instinct of life. Tough individuals are not overcome as soon as neurasthenic persons like me, but they have difficulty extricating themselves. Intellectuals get drunk early and suffer acute attacks on all the senses, which demand hard fighting to overcome. When they have beaten the foe, they recover quickly. The agreeable glow of depth rapture resembles the giggle-party jags of the nineteen-twenties when flappers and sheiks convened to sniff nitrogen protoxide.

L'ivresse des grandes profondeurs has one salient advantage over alcohol no hangover. If one is able to escape from its zone, the brain clears instantly and there are no horrors in the morning. I cannot read accounts of a record dive without wanting to ask the champion how drunk he was.

The effect, thought due to a slowing of nerve impulses from inert gas under high pressure, is not unique to nitrogen; it can occur from many gases (though not helium). The effect is similar to what patients experience inhaling an anesthetic such as nitrous oxide (N₂O). With increasing pressure of inhaled N₂O there is a progression of symptoms, from an initial feeling of euphoria to drunkenness and finally to unconsciousness.

Every year there are diving deaths attributed to nitrogen narcosis, mainly among divers who exceed recreational depth limits. To prevent the problem commercial divers switch to a mixture of helium and oxygen (heliox) at depths exceeding around 55m. Helium is much less soluble in tissues than nitrogen, and therefore is less likely to impair behavior (divers using helium still have to decompress to prevent DCS). Even setting aside the added cost and complexity, helium offers no advantage for recreational divers over ordinary air.

Because of similar (and additive) effects to excess nitrogen, alcohol should be avoided before any dive. A reasonable recommendation is total abstinence at least 24 hours before diving; by that time effects of alcohol should be gone.

Unlike the effects of alcohol, nitrogen narcosis dissipates quickly, as soon as the diver ascends to a safe level (usually less than 20 feet depth). There is also some evidence that some divers can become partially acclimated to the effects of excess nitrogen; the more frequently they dive the less each subsequent dive appears to affect them.

A Red Sea Survival Guide

Before you go....

Pack your dive kit, less weights and tanks, into a very large bag, then break the zip and secure with cable ties.

For clothing, do not pack lots of shoes, long trousers, jumpers, socks, towels or bed linen, as they are not required.

A wash kit is optional although for the sake of other please include a soap.

Remember to pack well in advance, at least 2 hours before the plane is due to depart is fine.

Always use twice as many bags the airline allows.

Baggage destined to be stored in the hold of the plane should weigh no more than 7 kilos, while your single piece of hand luggage should weigh no less than 37 kilos.

Once at the airport, find the correct terminal and check in.

If you have any trouble with your baggage allowance claim to be a golfer, and you will be waved through.

If you are taking a dry suit, wear this onto the plane; also stage bottles can be disguised as Duty free. Do not wear your BC, as this will inspire a fear the plane crashing into the sea, within the other passengers.

Always give your passport to someone who isn't as drunk as you are, that way you can't lose it.

Once through check-in, find the nearest bar; consume large quantities of alcohol until the boarding gate is about to

close. Then rush to the nearest burger outlet and get several Big Macs. Make your way as loudly as possible to the gate. Do not worry, as the plane will wait.

Once on the plane.

One of the facts of life of plane travel is known as Opposite Allocation. This means that whatever you want you will be assigned the opposite. If you are tall you will be given the smallest legroom, if you are fat, the slimmest chair. Of short temper, the seat next to the screaming kids, of weak bladder the furthest from the toilet.

On cheap Red Sea flights, you will get nothing for free. The watered down alcohol will cost you twice to three times London Pub prices.

As the plane finishes taxiing for take-off, jump up and rush to the toilet, as this is your last chance. Because if the plane crashes on take off, at least you'll know that there is not a mess in your underpants.

At the other end.

First thing to do is to find your passport, then find the dodgy little man selling visas. Buy one or the other dodgy little man with the AK-47 will take you away for a little examination. His gun may be strung from his shoulder with a bit of string, and he may have no laces in

those boots, but he does have a Soviet 7.62mm, full automatic assault rifle, with bayonet. Capable of firing 800 rpm, and can empty the 30 round magazine in 2 and a bit seconds, this will erode your slow tissue very quickly.

Do not argue with the solemn little man behind the desk, he is a friend of the man with the gun.

Then fight your way into the luggage hall, here even more dodgy little men will harass you, offering to carry your bags, swearing at them does not work and can land you in trouble. If you accept their offer they will demand payment at the bus and will not be able to lift too big a bag. The phrase "La Shukran" works well.

Then you will watch you bag be thrown high in to the air, and lashed with the barest of twine to the top of the bus.

On board.

When you arrive at the Boat, you will be asked to take off your shoes and socks. Please ensure that your feet are clean and do not smell, as they can only get worst.

Once you met the crew, and had another drink, some of your group will be whisked of to the local duty free shop (the one duty free shop). Here you will buy your alcohol for the week, be sure of what you want, as some of the beer uses the local troubled waters and will give you the wonders of rear liquid jet propulsion.

Your next mission is to throw all that carefully packed dive gear, into a plastic box under the dive bench. The walls of the box contain holes just big enough for a small torch/ strobe or dive computer to fall through.

Now you are ready to meet the neighbours. Find your bunk, whether it is in your cabin or up on deck, here you should introduce yourself to the locals, the Roaches, whom will be your friends for the next 7 days. Most boats have them, and they are good-natured and will not make too much noise at night, although there incessant curiosity for your clothes and bed can be annoying.

You should also now use the toilet, before you drink or eat anything, as this will be the last time for a while where you will not make a huge mess when you go. Also it will be a lot less painful and without the added flavour of blood.

Diving.

You should be aware that you do not usually require a dry suit in the Red Sea, so should have packed at most a 3mm wetsuit. This coupled with the generally smaller tanks than your average UK divers requirement will mean less weight is required. Start with at least 12 kilos and work down.

Gloves can be worn, but 5mm are over kill. Hoods should only be worn on polluted, night dives unless you wish to resemble a Gimp.

When entering from the boat try a straddle jump or Pike, rather the usually backward roll, as the backward roll would have to be done from the sun deck.

Most UK divers are shocked by the Vis, so a good tip to feel more at home, especially on wrecks, is go down to the seabed and kick up the silt. This will remind you of home and annoy most of our European Cousins, especially the Italians and the Germans.

Another good tip to feel more at home in the water is to paint the lenses in your mask brown, thus resembling UK waters, if thus not work try diving without a mask, but wear your sunnies.

Those without generous quantities of hair should be aware, and not stop for too long, as coral polyps are attracted

to any clean surfaces. The unaware balding diver can soon be found sporting a nice fan coral from the top of his head, and brain corals around the ears.

Most divers are afraid of Sharks; these are not the biggest fear. By far and away the most fearsome fish in the Red Sea are the Trigger Fish and the humble, little Clown Fish who will attack anything.

Most UK divers will consider themselves to be the best in the world, and this is evident by examining the behaviour of other nationality of diver. Beware of the Italian Coral Crawler. However some UK's forget their roots and quickly descent into the Euro Diver culture. These are the divers that you hear of being left behind by Liveaboards.

Most Divers try to carry a knife, although it's purpose is unclear. It cannot be used to cut lines, as there are none; also it serves no purpose against a Shark, Triggerfish or Clown fish. As Shark and Trigger have bigger teeth, and if the Clown fish isn't scared of something 20 times it's size, it isn't likely to be scared of something 20 times its size holding a knife.

Do not remove anything at all. The wrecks are dived more than any in the UK so have been stripped already. Trying to steal coral will mean the loss of a hand either under the water by Nature or on Land by the Law.

General Points.

The aim of the week is to get to the food before the big fat squaddie type bloke who eats everything.

Also beware of the sun as Egypt can get hot, no really it can.

Always treat the Crew with respect as your lives and food are in their hands.

Trust no one with Gold teeth, (except the editor of course).

Always wash your hands after handling the money. On a similar note if there is no toilet paper in the Jon, just go native, as that is what the left hand is for.

Be sure to bring something to read, or at least lots of pictures for the less educated. A personal stereo is a good idea.

Any Sea Sickness tablets required should be bought in bulk, as the boat does not moor near a town until the last night.

It is good practice to take your own first aid kit, with a several hygienically sealed syringes.

Last night in town.

For the Men: - Beware as you have just spent a week on a boat without any female company. Not everything in what looks like a dress is a woman.

The cost of real beer is high, nah very high in town. But you'll pay.

Do not talk to the children or you will lose all your money and marry a camel.

When the group goes and has a Bubble-Bubble on a pipe, Do join in it is the best laugh you can have with your pants on.

Most of all enjoy yourself as your plane may crash on the way home...

Diver of the Year 2000 Nominee

Nominee's Name :

Reason for Nomination :

Nominated by:

(Required for entry into the prize draw)

Please return to DO or Dry Officer before 10/00.